

around the State. One paper called him the “commuter’s friend.” Well, the commuter’s friend has found an apt home at the Department of Transportation. And I am just totally confident that his service will prove as loyal as our friendship, as our enduring friendship.

I know Andy to be a proven leader and a talented manager, experienced, efficient, energetic, a public servant of the first order, and above all, a man who gets things done. And that’s important. For this job it’s not enough to know your way around inside the beltway, at DOT, or working with the people who built the beltway.

So, you’ve got a good leader. And Andy takes his new position at a very critical time. This Department bears primary responsibility for putting the landmark Surface Transportation Act of 1991 into action, the act that Sam, his predecessor, worked so hard on. This act is creating jobs today, jobs to upgrade our Nation’s highway system, jobs to provide for mass transit and meet this country’s transportation needs.

And when I signed the new Surface Act last December, it made available some \$11 billion to the States. And we directed this Department and urged the States to put those dollars to work right away. In the nearly 3 months since I signed the act, we’ve delivered 20 percent more highway money than during the same period a year ago.

DOT continues to play a pivotal role helping the airline industry adapt to the changes brought on by deregulation, changes which are producing economic benefits through more efficient service. DOT also has been a faithful supporter of our military and their own transportation needs. And with your energy and ability, Andy, I know that this Department will continue to ensure that the United States remains a world leader in providing safe and efficient transportation.

To meet each of these challenges, and they are big, Andy will be able to call on a really dedicated team of transportation officials in the Department. And to each and every one of you who serve over there, we are grateful to you. You exemplify the very, very best in public service. And I want to salute you along with your new Secretary.

And now, with all of that said, it is with great pleasure that I turn the podium over to Mr. Justice Thomas for the swearing-in of our new Secretary of Transportation, Andrew H. Card, Jr. Thank you.

*Note: The President spoke at 9:04 a.m. at the National Air and Space Museum. In his remarks, he referred to Admiral James B. Busey IV, Deputy Secretary of Transportation, and Tabettha Card Mueller, daughter of Secretary Card. Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas administered the oath of office.*

## The President’s News Conference March 11, 1992

*The President.* Good morning. And first, on the politics, I think yesterday was a great day, and I am extremely grateful to the many people who worked so hard in these various States. We’ve been victorious in 15 States, and I’ll continue to seek the endorsement of the party in every primary.

I’ve tried to let the people of this country know that we will turn this country around, and our great Nation should be a world-class leader in every category of economic and social activity. We need jobs for every-

one, medical care that is available to everyone. We need to build an education system that prepares kids for the competitive challenges of tomorrow. We need housing that is affordable and plentiful. We need safer neighborhoods and job security. We need to compete internationally for world markets and increase our exports. And there are many problems and opportunities that face the Presidency.

And the voters of these eight States have given me their support. I think they feel I

have the experience and leadership to take America in new directions, to reach out for the complex solutions that we must undertake.

As we renew ourselves at home, we simply cannot relinquish our leadership abroad, either. The world is a vastly changed place from even a year ago. Democracy is won, the cold war is over, and now we have an opportunity to secure peace. We cannot let this opportunity pass. And Americans must not heed the lone trumpets of retreat. We must successfully meet every challenge, domestic or foreign.

And one of these important challenges is space. And our civil space program has had remarkable technological success over the last 30 years. America's taken great pride in the achievements of astronauts and our space scientists. And now the genius of that program must focus on new initiatives for the nineties. We intend to deploy a space station by the end of this decade. We must develop a new launch system that augments the space shuttle, a new system that can carry payloads which will give America superiority and flexibility in commercial as well as in scientific fields.

And I want to acknowledge the work of Admiral Dick Truly in providing valued leadership in the space program as an astronaut and as the Administrator of NASA. He deserves great credit for so many of the successes of our space efforts. And as we consider new directions in space, I intend to nominate Daniel S. Goldin, the senior vice president of TRW, Inc., to head NASA. He's a leader; Dan is a leader in America's aerospace industry and a man of extraordinary energy and vitality. And working with the Vice President as Chairman of the Space Council, Dan Goldin will ensure America's leadership in space as we enter the 21st century.

Thank you very much. Now, I have a meeting with some Members of Congress here in a little bit. But I'd be delighted to take some questions. Helen [Helen Thomas, United Press International].

#### *Defense Budget*

Q. Mr. President, what do you say to critics in your own party who say you stand for nothing and that you really have no basic

goals leading us toward the 21st century? And also, in your opening statement, you seem to be affirming a Pentagon report that we should be a military superpower, the superpower in the world, world-class. Did I misinterpret?

*The President.* Well, to the critics I say, please listen to the statement I just gave and to the many initiatives we've taken. And I don't think there are that many critics in our own party.

Q. A lot of protest votes.

*The President.* Well, yes, and I think a lot of that stems from the economy. I'm absolutely certain of that. And I believe those people will be with me in the fall. I'll conduct myself in a way that they will be with me in the fall.

In terms of defense, yes, I feel a keen responsibility to keep this country strong. I have made recommendations to cut defense. Those recommendations came to me from Colin Powell and the Joint Chiefs, the Secretary of Defense. And now what you're seeing is a lot of political promising on Capitol Hill, and to pay for it, they want to cut into the muscle of defense. And I'm not going to do that. I have an obligation for the national security of this country, and I'm going to fulfill it by having a strong defense.

So I don't know what you're referring to out of the Pentagon, but that is my view. And I'm sure it is shared by the Secretary of Defense.

#### *Presidential Primaries*

Q. Mr. President?

*The President.* Yes, Terry [Terence Hunt, Associated Press].

Q. Many Republicans are calling on Pat Buchanan to get out of the race, saying that he's delivered his message and that all he's doing now is weakening you. Do you think that Mr. Buchanan is hurting you, and if you had your druthers, would you rather see him out of the race?

*The President.* I guess anybody that runs for office would rather have no opposition. I mean, you don't have to be a TRW rocket scientist to gather that one in. And I've tried to avoid entanglement there, taking my case to the voters. And it's been very,

very strong, and I'm very happy with it. So I would just let each person on both sides sort out their own fate.

Q. What's the point of him staying in any longer?

*The President.* You're asking the wrong guy.

#### *Federal Government Size*

Q. Mr. President, both you and the Vice President have interpreted the votes for your opponent as being a sign that people out there feel that the Government is too big; as you said, that it costs too much, that it overregulates and overtaxes, all circumstances which either have developed or persisted under your 3 years in office. Why are those interpretations reasons to vote for you again?

*The President.* Because I think we've got good programs to do something about it. I think the Government is too big and does spend too much. And we have sent up budgets that would constrain the growth of spending, and we're having difficulty with the Congress, again, on that question. So we've got to stand for that, and I think we've got to make clear to the American people that we're trying to do something about it.

#### *Taxes*

Q. Well, now, sir, that you have indicated you feel that the budget deal and the breaking of the tax pledge that went with it was a mistake, are you prepared now to renew that pledge for the rest of your administration?

*The President.* Let me say this: The whole thing, given the way it's worked out now, is a mistake. But the thing that is good about that budget agreement is the spending caps. And right now, we are seeing Congress trying to remove the only constraint on domestic spending that exists, domestic discretionary spending, and that's the spending caps. So I want to fight to keep those in place.

Q. What about taxes, sir?

*The President.* Well, I don't want to raise taxes. I'm going to veto this tax bill.

Q. Mr. President, if I can revisit—

*The President.* You've got too many. This would be the worst time to raise taxes. No

time is good, but this would be the worst. Yes?

Q. Is the pledge on again?

*The President.* I'll leave it sit right there. I'm going to veto this tax bill.

Yes?

#### *U.S. Defense Role*

Q. If I can revisit Helen Thomas's question, a planning paper leaked out from the Pentagon last week which implied that in the future the United States should be the world policeman rather than place our emphasis on collective security. Do you share the Pentagon's feeling about—

*The President.* If this was an official Pentagon position, I expect the Secretary of Defense would come talk to the President about it. So please do not put too much emphasis on leaked reports, particularly ones that I haven't seen, because I can't comment on it. I just don't know; I'm sorry. I even missed the story on it.

Q. What is your own philosophy, sir? Do you feel we should be moving more toward collective security, or should the United States bear most of the burden for policing the world?

*The President.* Well, I think the United States has a burden to bear. But we have worked effectively through multilateral organizations. The clearest example of that is what happened in the Gulf war. You see the United Nations trying to stay involved in the resolution of the Yugoslavian question. We have peacekeeping set up in Cambodia and other places that relieves some of the unilateral burden from the United States.

But we are the leaders, and we must continue to lead. We must continue to stay engaged. So, it isn't a clear-cut choice of either-or. For people that challenge our leadership around the world, they simply do not understand how the world looks to us for leadership. Now, that does not preclude working closely with multilateral organizations.

#### *Iraq*

Q. The Deputy Prime Minister of Iraq is at the U.N. today asking to ease the sanctions. Is there any room for compromise?

*The President.* I would just simply stay with the views that have been so clearly expressed in a unanimous fashion by the Security Council itself. And there will be no compromise on the part of the United States with full compliance with the U.N. resolutions. Iraq is concealing, and they've got to stop doing that.

Q. In an electoral year, sir, how far are you going to go to have them comply with the resolutions? You are going through an election. Are you ready to have an attack against Iraq to demonstrate—

*The President.* Let's simply say I'd like to see them comply with the resolutions. It is in their clear interest to comply with the resolutions. And if they don't comply with the resolutions, then we'll contemplate all alternatives.

#### Taxes

Q. Mr. President, back on taxes for a minute. In one of the interviews before the Georgia primary, where you talked about your view that the budget deal was a mistake, you also said that you thought a surtax on millionaires might be the only way to get the capital gains tax cut that you want. Is that something you'd consider? Is there any room—

*The President.* No, I'm against that.

Q. You're against the surtax in any circumstances?

*The President.* Yes.

Susan [Susan Spencer, CBS News], and then John [John Cochran, NBC News].

Q. Why?

*The President.* Because I don't want to raise taxes.

Q. Even on millionaires?

*The President.* I don't want to raise taxes.

Q. Now I'll get to my question.

*The President.* You've already had it. You've got now what they call a followup.

Q. That was her question.

*The President.* No, no. Now, wait a minute.

Q. I yield my followup.

Q. Thank you.

*The President.* You can have her—wait a minute. You've assigned your followup to her? Okay. So you have a question and a followup?

Q. No, I don't. Well, I might.

*The President.* Go on, Susan.

#### Assistance to Former Soviet Union

Q. Thank you. President Nixon was fairly scathing in a memo that's been circulated, referring to the U.S. response in the crisis in the Soviet Union as "pathetically inadequate." He also implied that a truly courageous leader would go before the American public and explain why, even when foreign aid is so unpopular, we have to pursue this more vigorously than we are. Do you have any plans to do that?

*The President.* Well, I think the American people know of my commitment to U.S. leadership around the world. In the first place, I read that Nixon paper, and I didn't consider it scathing. But there's a good opportunity to ask him about it because he'll be in town tonight. I'll be attending a dinner there. And maybe there will be a chance for him to clarify what he means by all of this. I stay in close touch with President Nixon; I have great respect for his views on foreign policy. And when I look at the six points or whatever it was in that letter, I think we're in very close agreement.

Now, where we might have a difference is, we're living in a time of constrained resources. There isn't a lot of money around. We are spending too much as it already is. So to do the things I would really like to do, I don't have a blank check for all of that. And so, in that area there may be a slight difference, but I think the question should be addressed to President Nixon because fundamentally we're in agreement on how we ought to approach Russia and the other independent countries there.

Q. The next item to come up is likely to be a request for about a billion dollars for the United States to support the ruble. Will you go to Congress and ask for that money?

*The President.* Well, we're talking now about a stabilization fund.

Q. Will you support that?

*The President.* I will wait to make a prudent decision based on the recommendation of top advisers. But Treasury is considering it. The Secretary of State is considering it. This isn't a decision you just sit and click your fingers on. But we're talking to

the Soviets about this, or the Russians about this, I should say. Boris Yeltsin will be coming here, and they know there are certain things that they have to do before the international community will put the monies in there that they would like to have in a stabilization fund.

So all this is evolving. But in principle, do I think it's a good idea? Yes.

#### *Presidential Primaries*

Q. You said last week you'd be willing to bury the hatchet with Pat Buchanan. How far would you be willing to go? If he gets out of the race long before the California primary, doesn't divide the party, which is already divided out there, would you be willing to sit down, discuss issues with him? Would you be willing to give him his 15 minutes at the Republican Convention with a speech?

*The President.* Why don't we just wait and see how all that evolves, John? He has said today he wants to stay in there. That's his choice. And I'm clearly staying in there. And I think we're doing pretty well. I think there's a little more recognition now that this challenge is sending the President a message, and I feel very good about where things stand. I think I've detected a slight change in the way it's being presented to the public, too.

So we'll just keep on and let him make these decisions. I really have tried very hard not to engage. Even a reply to your question would be more engagement than I want to go forward with.

#### *British Election*

Q. If you won't talk about Pat Buchanan, let me ask you about another election, the British election. There was a time when policymakers in this country worried when there was a Labor Prime Minister in power. Hasn't that changed over the years? Now we've had the end of the cold war, nuclear disarmament isn't the big issue. Does it really matter that much to the fate of the United States who's in power in Britain?

*The President.* I expect the worst thing an American President could do would be to try to intervene in an election in another country. Having said all that, the respect I have for the Prime Minister knows no

bounds. John Major is a superb leader, and I work very, very closely with him, through very difficult times, I might add. But I think it would be most inappropriate if I got into picking winners and losers in a British election or a French election or German election or any other. And I don't—I've got to be careful how I word things.

You know, it's different, if I might just put your question, very sound question, in a political context. It's easy for a candidate to go out and give an opinion on all that, but it's not so easy for a President. I have certain responsibilities as President. I am watching this evolution over there with great interest. I think it's perfectly appropriate to express my respect for John Major, but I don't want to go beyond that by looking like we're trying to shape a foreign election, whether it's here or whether it's anywhere.

Q. But isn't it true the Labor Party's platform, its foreign policy platform, is no longer antithetical to your foreign policy?

*The President.* I have to study before I can tell.

#### *The Economy and Presidential Primaries*

Q. Mr. President, if the economy does turn around, do you believe that that protest vote of roughly 30 percent will automatically disappear and people will—

*The President.* I believe it's going to come home anyway, Judy [Judy Wiessler, Houston Chronicle]. I don't know whether any of you heard my Florida campaign manager on television the other night with "Larry King Live." And this man is very able, this Florida campaign manager, my son Jeb. He was superb. And he pointed out that he saw some exit polls that said some of the Democratic primary voters were going to vote for me in the fall. Now, my boy is never wrong on a statistic like that.

And I would just point out that we're reading a lot about the other side, but let's take a look at some of the ones going into the Democratic election. We're going to do well, and I really believe they'll come home to roost. And we want them. I'm trying to conduct myself in such a way as to say, look, I understand your feeling on this issue or that, but we need your support, and we

want you. And P.S., take a look at the alternatives over there. That's not even in focus yet. That's not even in focus yet, what the general election's going to be like, because we don't know who's there yet. But it's going to be fun, I'll tell you.

Yes, Ellen [Ellen Warren, Knight-Ridder Newspapers].

Q. Mr. President, you seem to be brushing off this 30-to-40-percent consistent voting for Pat Buchanan as a frustration with the economy. Sir, doesn't the buck stop here? Don't you take any responsibility—and your predecessor, Ronald Reagan—for the state of the economy, sir?

*The President.* Absolutely.

Q. Well, so why should people vote for you if it's your fault?

*The President.* Because they know I'm trying to change it, and they know that I've been a good leader. And they're going to be talking about leadership, not campaign promises. And it isn't easy. And I think when we get through defining clearly my objectives for this country, it will all come out when we get into the general election that these people will be voting for me. But when a family's hurting and they want to send a message, they don't want to go over and vote in the Democratic side because they see them as much worse. What do they do? They come and vote and try to express themselves in the manner they have. I really believe that that's the situation.

Back of the room.

Q. What's to prevent them from saying, sir, well, the President himself says it's his fault and the Republican Party's fault; I'm going to go the other way?

*The President.* Oh, you see, I only gave you half the equation. Everybody can accept blame. The Congress can accept its share of the blame. All of us seem to live and die by polls these days, but if I might be able to quote one, look at the ones that blame the Congress much more than the President. And please get that out there because I need the help. I'll be spelling that out.

Helen, in the back? Yes, sir, over here.

Q. Mr. President, you said you didn't want to talk specifically about Patrick Buchanan, but your surrogates have called him everything from a fascist to racist to possibly

anti-Semitic. Do you endorse what your surrogates are saying? Do you want to rein them in? And what do you think Mr. Buchanan wants if he can't win the nomination?

*The President.* I don't know the answer to the second part and probably wouldn't respond if I did. I think most fair-minded viewers would feel that I've come under attack from my opponent, so I'm delighted when people defend me.

Helen. I mean Sarah [Sarah McClendon, McClendon News Service].

Q. I was talking about the attacks—

*The President.* Yes, excuse me. Go ahead, yes. Please, help me.

Q. I was talking about the attacks your surrogates were making on Mr. Buchanan, not to the defense of yourself. Do you endorse the attacks they're making on Mr. Buchanan?

*The President.* I endorse the strong defenders I have out there and am very pleased that they're out there getting the message out loud and clear.

Yes, Jess [Jessie Stearns, Stearns News Bureau].

#### *Economic Plan*

Q. Mr. President, some of your advisers have pressed you to fight Congress with everything you have, and if Congress won't pass a growth package that you want to sign by March 20th, that you should take the bull by the horns and do everything you can: start vetoing line items in their budget, index capital gains by regulation, go and have the Beck decision enforced, all these kinds of things. Have you decided to do any of that?

*The President.* No, I haven't decided it. I do think that in the fall the case is going to be taken to the American people regarding Congress. But I think at this juncture people are less anxious to hear their President blaming somebody than they are seeing him try to get something done. And so that will guide me. But I can't be under unilateral fire and not at least help put the congressional part of this into perspective. But I think people—look, Ellen asked me, do I accept my share of responsibility? Sure.

But I want to be sure Congress accepts its, and see what we can do.

What I've been trying to do is get a stimulative economic package through, lay the broad politics aside, and just take seven simple points that most economists think would turn around confidence and stimulate the economy. And I'm going to keep working on that. I'm going to have to veto a broad kind of handout, tax-and-spend bill, and then I'm still going to keep trying to get it through. And then later on, we'll have all the debate out there as to the responsibility of Congress or changing Congress which, of course, I feel very strongly about. But I think the people are less interested in hearing somebody going around blaming somebody, even though they're getting a lot of that from the Democratic side, than they are on, now, what are you going to do about it? How are you going to help us? How are you going to get this economy moving? And we've got good programs to do just that.

#### *Presidential Advisers*

Q. And that's where the advisers, if I may, sir, that's what the advisers, your advisers, tell us they're telling—

*The President.* Well, I've got to read the papers before I know what the advisers are doing.

Q. They're asking that you define your Presidency. That's what they keep saying. And you seem to be saying that people want you to define the Presidency. So, what do you think that means at this point?

*The President.* You know one of the things I like least about this job is commenting on what advisers say, handlers say in campaigns. They're normally referred to as handlers in the campaign season and advisers—has a nicer tone—in the noncampaign season. And I read all the time about some anonymous source who is known to feel strongly about the very questions you asked about, Jess. I read about ideas that I'm considering I haven't even heard of yet. I don't know. What I'd say to the American people is, please ask for a name to be placed next to the source so I can get mad at the guy who's doing this.

It's strange out there. It's strange. No, really, I wish people would, in the White

House or elsewhere, say, "My name is Joe Jones; I think the President needs to do this," or "I'm Sally Smith, and I think he ought to consider these three options." Instead of that, I pick up the paper every day and read some insider known to be close to the President or a person high up in the party not currently with the White House but having served there a long time, and it's confusing to me. And I think the American people don't like it. I don't think they like it very much. I'd like to see some sources put next to—yes?

#### *Free Trade and Job Creation*

Q. Mr. President, you have often said that you were going to get more jobs, bring back jobs. And it's—

*The President.* Sarah—

Q. —the figures have shown that the jobs have—

*The President.* We have another San Antonio incident.

Q. —gone overseas. So with the jobs having gone overseas and we've lost our manufacturing base, and a poll of many of these highfalutin, very big firms say they are not going to build another plant in the United States when they can go to Mexico and pay a dollar an hour and not have to bother with environmental regulations and safety regulations. So, how are you going to get these jobs increased?

*The President.* Because we're going to pass the NAFTA; the North American free trade agreement is going to increase jobs dramatically. And the more exports you have, the more domestic jobs you have.

Now, some labor unions disagree with that. Some politicians disagree with that. Some are sounding the siren's call of protection: Pull back and don't engage in foreign trade. And I disapprove of that. I'm going to keep fighting for open markets, more access to the markets of others, conclusion of the GATT round, a conclusion of the North American free trade agreement. And that's what I'll keep doing, and that will create jobs. It's exports that have saved this economy as it goes through these tough times, and it is exports that will lead an extraordinary growth in the future.

Q. Can't we put a limit on the technology

that we have taken overseas?

*The President.* No, we're not going to limit. We're going to encourage. I'd like to see our cooperation with Russia, for example, result in a modernization over there. It will open up vast new markets for the United States. The potential is limitless. So we can't look inward like we did in the thirties where we threw the whole world into depression by a failed policy of isolation and pure protection. I'm not going to do that.

*House Bank Controversy*

Q. Mr. President, the Vice President has called the check bouncing scandal at the House bank a good reason for term limitations, for Democrats, presumably. Do you feel he's right on that issue and should there be full disclosure of all of the Members who have—

*The President.* I'm strongly for term limitations. And secondly, I think there should be full disclosure. I hate to recite history here, but when I was in the Congress way back in the sixties with a group of newly elected Congressmen in what we called the 90th Club then, 90th Congress, I kind of took the lead in urging full disclosure of assets and liabilities. I did not endear myself to some of my colleagues, but I think that full disclosure of that, of one's own personal finances, is important. I think full disclosure of something of this nature is important, too, on a financial disclosure of that nature. So I agree that it's the way to go, and I think, inevitably, it will happen.

*Economic Plan*

Q. One more on the economy, sir, if I could. The Democrats, even though their program includes a tax increase, the Senate package, say that it includes elements of all seven components of your economic revitalization program. Since, as you've said, the priority here is the economy and not politics, why not attempt to compromise instead of threatening to veto or rejecting it out of hand?

*The President.* Because I think they're so locked into a tax increase, that I was asked about earlier, that it would be very hard to get that done now. We've tried. Our leaders up in the Congress have tried very hard to get the focus on these investment incen-

tives. And I'm afraid I'm going to have to just end up vetoing the tax-and-spend bill. And I'm not giving up hope, though, on going forward then and saying, let's try this, let's try to get this through, but not do it in a way that is totally unacceptable.

Q. But you said—

*The President.* Ann [Ann Devroy, Washington Post], you had your hand up. Do you still have a question?

Q. Yes, Mr. President, I do.

*The President.* What is it?

*1990 Budget Agreement*

Q. When you said last week that you regretted the decision on the budget deal, was that budget deal a policy mistake or a political mistake?

*The President.* Total mistake. Policy, political, everything else.

Q. What was wrong with the policy?

*The President.* Policy, because it simply did not do what I thought, hoped it would do: control this, get this economy moving. There were some good things about it. So I can't say, shouldn't say, total mistake. But the spending caps was good; getting the spending caps was good. Keeping the Government going as opposed to shutting down for whatever number of days it would have taken, that was good. But when you have to weigh a decision in retrospect, have the benefit of hindsight, I would say both policy and politically, I think we can all agree that it has drawn a lot of fire.

Last question.

*RNC Chairman*

Q. Mr. Buchanan. Revisit him one more time. He—

*The President.* I'll give you another question because I don't want to take any—go ahead, try it.

Q. He said as a condition for him coming back that he would have to get rid of Rich Bond as chairman of the campaign committee, or the Republican National Committee. Do you care if Buchanan himself comes back to roost?

*The President.* Do I what?

Q. Do you care if Buchanan himself comes back to roost?



*The President.* Listen, I want everybody. I want everybody to vote for me. But Rich Bond has my full confidence. He's doing a superb job up at the Republican National Committee. So that's the way I'd answer it.

All right, this is the last one.

#### *Interest Rates*

*Q.* On the economy—

*The President.* Got any other subject?

*Q.* In your economic plan, the Fed can affect short-term interest rates, but it seems to be that long-term interest rates may be impeding growth. Do you think it's time for the Treasury and the Fed to come up with a strategy on pushing long-term interest rates down?

*The President.* Well, I don't. I am much more concerned about stimulating the economy today than I am about the long-term rates. They are manageable at this juncture. What would exacerbate the long-term rate problem would be to pass the Democratic tax legislation, for example, or some of the spending bills I've seen up there.

One thing that would shoot the long-term rates through the roof, and I'll guarantee you this, would be to get rid of the firewall or get rid of the spending caps that were a part of the 1990 budget agreement. In my view, that would send a totally counterproductive signal to the markets. In fact, when a very able Senator proposed kind of a tax plan that looked like the deficit would be exacerbated, the long-term shot up just on the proposal.

So, I think now the answer is to keep working with the Fed. I think what the Fed has done is good. If you were to ask me the question, would I like to see interest rates still lower, I would, I would, real rates. But I think the main worry now is not the long-term rate problem or certainly inflation. It is economic growth and stimulation.

I really do have to go because I don't want to—do I have time for one more?

*Mr. Fitzwater.* Okay.

*The President.* All right. I really have an 11 a.m. Yes.

#### *Campaign Travel*

*Q.* Mr. President, it appears whenever you leave the White House and hit the cam-

paign trail, your approval ratings seem to drop.

*The President.* So now stay here, huh?

*Q.* I'm wondering if you now think the answer is to stay here more and campaign out there less.

*The President.* I've not seen a correlation, actually. But no, I don't feel that. But you know, I can understand the debate that has gone on: Should the President be out campaigning, or should he be here? And what I tried to do is achieve a reasonable balance. If you don't go to these States—you had an enormously important election day yesterday where we did very, very well, very well. And if I had not, if I'd have showed disdain by not even showing up in these States, I think that could have been counterproductive.

On the other hand, I recognize that I have responsibilities that no other candidate has for leading this country and for being the President. And there are plenty of problems to face here and plenty of initiatives to take that could keep you here the whole time. So, what we did is try to achieve a balance. I think we're going to go to Michigan for one day, part of a day. And we have a primary coming up there. But I think the way the vote is working out, the overwhelming endorsement in terms of these delegations and everything, I think that you'll be seeing me here a lot, but not to the exclusion of going out.

Another side about going out: You do get to talk to people. You do get to hear first-hand about the problems the country faces. So I think the answer is: Achieve a proper balance. I hope I'm doing that. And I'm going to keep on trying to do it because it is very important that when you're elected President, you be President. But I also determined that I'm the best one to lead the next 4 years, and so you've got to do some of the politics. And that's how we've reached the formula that we use.

I've got to go. Pat [Patrick McGrath, Fox Television]?

#### *RNC Chairman*

*Q.* Prime-time address after March 20th? You used to stand up for Al Haig when you were head of the Republican National Com-

mittee; you used to stand up to Al Haig and say you didn't work for the President and you didn't go along with a lot of what Richard Nixon wanted you to do. Rich Bond now is favoring your candidacy, calling Pat Buchanan, accusing him of race-baiting. Is that fair?

Q. Could you do this at the mike, sir?

Q. We can't hear you.

*The President.* Well, good, because I'm not going to answer it. [Laughter] I think the President is seen to be the titular head of the party. It's always been that way. And just like I support incumbent Senators and Congressmen, I think it would be appro-

priate that the national committee support the President. And I supported—what?

Q. You stood up to Al Haig. Al Haig asked you to do things at the RNC that you didn't want to do.

*The President.* That's quite different than endorsing the President. I worked very hard for President Nixon when he was President, as chairman of the national committee.

*Note: The President's 123d news conference began at 10:34 a.m. in the Briefing Room at the White House. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this news conference.*

## Remarks to the American Society of Association Executives

March 11, 1992

Chairman Fondren, fellow Texan, thank you for that introduction. May I salute President Taylor and all the award winners here today. I heard a story about how when Lyndon Baines Johnson moved from the House to the Senate, Jake Pickle and Gene Fondren, then Texas State legislators, flipped a coin to decide who'd run for office and go to Washington. Well, Congressman Pickle's been calling for a rematch ever since. [Laughter] And this organization is very fortunate to have as its chairman a man of this strength and a man of this conviction.

Robert Frost once wrote that an idea is a feat of association. Well, association is an idea as old as the American dream itself. Actually, de Tocqueville 150 years ago, more than that, had much to say about you. He said, "At the head of some new undertaking in the United States you will be sure to find an association." Well, since that time, associations have played a vital role in our country's progress, and they continue that mission today, defining new frontiers and exploring new territory.

Before I spoke, President Taylor handed out the Associations Advance America Awards to salute those who've found a way to help, to be, in fact, Points of Light. We hear too often about what's wrong in Amer-

ica. Well, this is what's right about America, and I salute you for what you are doing to help your communities. And again, I single out the awardees here who have starred in all of this.

Of course, it's an election year. Independent of the current preoccupation with the hype and spin of the campaigns, there will remain the issues, the big things, the core concerns of every American that transcend political party or philosophical ideology: jobs, family, peace. They hold us together as a society. They are more than issues we bring to the next election; they are the legacy we must give to the next generation.

And really, that's what I want to talk to you about today, not just the issues but our mood as a Nation and how we must act now if we're to change America for the better. Today, weighing most heavily in the hearts and on the minds of Americans is the state of our economy: jobs, preserving jobs, creating jobs. You in this room know best, virtually every industry and every profession in America. I don't have to tell you that people are worried about the future.

Frankly, we've had tough economic times before, with higher unemployment but less national alarm. There's something different about today's times, something that touches